

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An information transmission apparatus, comprising:

reception means for receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storage means for storing the received plurality of taste information and group information ~~associated~~ in association with the plurality of users;

search means for receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and searching for at least two a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information each other from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means;

retrieval means for retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with ~~a first the second user of the at least two taste information searched by the search means~~ for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with ~~a second user of the at least two taste information the first user~~; and

transmission means for transmitting the retrieved taste information or group information associated with the second user to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the ~~second first user of the at least two taste information~~.

2-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) An information transmission method of an information transmission apparatus, comprising:

~~a reception step of~~ receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storing, in a predetermined storage unit, the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

receiving, by the information transmission apparatus, an introduction request including search key information from a first user;

~~a search step of~~ searching, by the information transmission apparatus, for at least two a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information each other from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in ~~[[a]]~~ the predetermined storage unit;

retrieving taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user; and

~~a transmission step of~~ transmitting, by the information transmission apparatus, at least the retrieved taste information or group information associated with ~~a first~~ the second user of ~~the at least two taste information searched in the search step~~ to a terminal apparatus corresponding to ~~a second~~ the first user of ~~the at least two taste information, the transmitted taste information or group information not being associated with the second user of the at least two taste information.~~

12. (Currently Amended) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein

the ~~transmission~~ transmitting step transmits at least the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the ~~first~~

second user of the ~~at least two taste information~~ to the terminal apparatus of the ~~second~~ first user.

13. (Currently Amended) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein

the ~~reception~~ receiving the introduction request step receives a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information;

the ~~search~~ searching step searches for taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information of the plurality of users stored in the predetermined storage unit to identify the second user; and

the ~~transmission~~ transmitting step transmits at least the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the ~~first~~ second user of the ~~at least two taste information~~ to the terminal apparatus of the ~~second~~ first user.

14. (Currently Amended) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein

the ~~transmission~~ transmitting step transmits at least the taste information of the ~~first~~ second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the ~~first~~ second user of the ~~at least two taste information~~ to the terminal apparatus of the ~~second~~ first user.

15. (Currently Amended) The information transmission method according to claim 11, wherein

the ~~reception~~ receiving the introduction request step receives a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information;

the ~~search~~ searching step searches for taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information of the plurality of users stored in the predetermined storage unit to identify the second user; and

the ~~transmission~~ transmitting step transmits at least the taste information of the ~~first~~ second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the ~~first~~ second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~ to the terminal apparatus of the ~~second~~ first user.

16. (Currently Amended) An information reception method of a terminal apparatus, the information reception method comprising:

~~a transmission step of transmitting, by the terminal apparatus, an introduction request including search key information~~ taste information that represents a taste of a first user to a predetermined apparatus that stores, in association with a plurality of users, a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of ~~[[a]]~~ the plurality of users; and

~~a reception step of receiving, by the terminal apparatus,~~ taste information or group information associated with a second user ~~of at least two taste information~~ for introduction to the first user, the received taste information or group information not being associated with the first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~ and being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the ~~[[taste]]~~ search key information at least transmits to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, after searching for the second user associated with ~~at least two~~ taste information having a resemblance to the search key information ~~each other~~ from the plurality of taste information stored therein in association with the plurality of users and retrieving the taste

information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user.

17. (Currently Amended) The information reception method of a terminal apparatus according to claim 16, wherein

the ~~reception~~ receiving step receives the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, the group information being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the ~~taste~~ search key information at least transmits after the searching.

18. (Currently Amended) The information reception method of a terminal apparatus according to claim 16, wherein

the ~~transmission~~ transmitting step transmits a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information to the predetermined apparatus; and

the ~~reception~~ receiving step receives the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, the group information being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the search key information at least transmits after the searching ~~for the at least two taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored therein.~~

19. (Currently Amended) The information reception method of a terminal apparatus according to claim 16, wherein

the ~~reception~~ receiving step receives at least the taste information of the second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that

is associated with the second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, the taste information and the group information of the second user being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the taste search key information ~~of the first user~~ at least transmits after the searching.

20. (Currently Amended) The information reception method of a terminal apparatus according to claim 16, wherein

the ~~transmission~~ transmitting step transmits a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information to the predetermined apparatus; and

the ~~reception~~ receiving step receives at least the taste information of the second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, the taste information and the group information of the second user being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the search key information at least transmits after the searching ~~for the at least two taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored therein.~~

21. (Currently Amended) An information transmission apparatus, comprising:

a reception unit configured to receive a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

a storage unit configured to store the received plurality of taste information and group information ~~associated~~ in association with the plurality of users;

a search unit configured to receive an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and to search for at least two a second user associated with taste

information having a resemblance to ~~each other~~ the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage unit;

a retrieval unit configured to retrieve at least taste information or group information associated with ~~a first~~ the second user ~~of the at least two taste information searched by the search unit~~ for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with ~~a second user of the at least two taste information~~ the first user; and

a transmission unit configured to transmit the retrieved taste information or group information associated with the second user to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the ~~second~~ first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~.

22. (Currently Amended) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

the transmission unit is configured to transmit at least the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the ~~first~~ second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~ to the terminal apparatus of the ~~second~~ first user.

23. (Currently Amended) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

the ~~reception~~ search unit is configured to receive a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information;

the search unit is configured to search for taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in the storage unit to identify the second user; and

the transmission unit is configured to transmit at least the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the ~~first~~ second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~ to the terminal apparatus of the ~~second~~ first user.

24. (Currently Amended) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

the transmission unit is configured to transmit at least the taste information of the ~~first~~ second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the ~~first~~ second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~ to the terminal apparatus of the ~~second~~ first user.

25. (Currently Amended) The information transmission apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

the ~~reception~~ search unit is configured to receive a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information;

the search unit is configured to search for taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in the storage unit to identify the second user; and

the transmission unit is configured to transmit at least the taste information of the ~~first~~ second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the ~~first~~ second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~ to the terminal apparatus of the ~~second~~ first user.

26. (Currently Amended) A terminal apparatus, comprising:

a transmission unit configured to transmit an introduction request including search key ~~[[taste]]~~ information that represents a taste of a first user to a predetermined apparatus that stores, in association with a plurality of users, a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of ~~[[a]]~~ the plurality of users; and

a reception unit configured to receive taste information or group information associated with a second user ~~of at least two taste information~~ for introduction to the first user, the received taste information or group information not being associated with the first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~ and being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the ~~plurality of taste~~ search key information at least transmits to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, after searching for the second user associated with at least two taste information having a resemblance to the search key information ~~each other~~ from the plurality of taste information stored therein in association with the plurality of users and retrieving the taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user.

27. (Currently Amended) The terminal apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the reception unit is configured to receive the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, the group information being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the ~~taste~~ search key information at least transmits after the searching.

28. (Currently Amended) The terminal apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the transmission unit is configured to transmit a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information to the predetermined apparatus; and

the reception unit is configured to receive the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, the group information being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the search key information at least transmits after the searching ~~for the at least two taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored therein.~~

29. (Currently Amended) The terminal apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the reception unit is configured to receive at least the taste information of the second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, the taste information and the group information of the second user being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the ~~taste~~ search key information of the first user at least transmits after the searching.

30. (Currently Amended) The terminal apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the transmission unit is configured to transmit a part of the plurality of taste information as the search key information to the predetermined apparatus; and the reception unit is configured to receive at least the taste information of the second user and the group information that represents groups that the plurality of users belong to and that is associated with the second user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, the taste information and the group information of the second user being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the search key information at least transmits after the searching ~~for the at least two taste information including the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored therein.~~

31. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having embedded therein instructions, which when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method, comprising:

receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storing the received plurality of taste information and group information ~~associated in~~ association with the plurality of users;

receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user;

searching for ~~at least two~~ a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information ~~each other~~ from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storing step;

retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with ~~a first the~~ second user ~~of the at least two taste information searched in the searching~~ for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with a ~~second the first~~ user ~~of the at least two taste information~~; and

transmitting the retrieved taste information or group information to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the ~~second~~ first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~.

32. (Currently Amended) An information transmission apparatus, comprising:

reception means for receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storage means for storing the received plurality of taste information and group information ~~associated in~~ association with the plurality of users;

search means for receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and searching for at least two a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to each other the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means; and

transmission means for transmitting at least taste information or group information associated with ~~a first~~ the second user, for introduction to the first user, of the at least two taste information to a terminal apparatus corresponding to ~~a second~~ the first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~, when the reception means receives ~~taste~~ the search key information from one of the plurality of users, wherein

the transmitted taste information or group information is not associated with the ~~second~~ first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~.

33. (Currently Amended) An information reception apparatus, comprising:

transmission means for transmitting an introduction request including search key ~~[[taste]]~~ information that represents a taste of a first user to a server that stores, in association with a plurality of users, a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of the plurality of users;

reception means for receiving at least taste information or group information associated with a second user ~~of at least two taste information~~ for introduction to the first user, from the server, the taste information or group information being transmitted to a ~~terminal apparatus~~ the information reception apparatus corresponding to the first user ~~of the at least two taste information~~; and

registration means for registering the received taste information or group information as said first user's taste information or group information in the server, wherein

the ~~at least two~~ taste information or group information is information that the server
that has received the search key information at least transmits to the information reception
apparatus corresponding to the first user, after searching for the second user associated with
taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of
taste information stored therein in association with the plurality of users and retrieving the
taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the
first user ~~have a resemblance to each other and are searched by the server from a plurality of~~
~~taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users stored in the server,~~
and

the received taste information or group information is not associated with the first
user of ~~the at least two taste information~~.